

**CLARK COUNTY
CLEAN WATER COMMISSION
Meeting Notes**

Wednesday, March 1, 2006

6:30 – 8:30 P.M.

Public Works Operations Conference Room B-1
4700 NE 78th Street, Vancouver

Clark County Clean Water Commission Members Present

Tim Crawford, Robert Even, Bill Owen, Patty Page, Art Stubbs, Virginia van Breemen, Ron Wilson

Clark County Clean Water Commission Members Absent

Susan Rasmussen

Clark County Staff

Earl Rowell, Trista Kobluskie, County Commissioner Steve Stuart, Ron Wierenga

Public

Thom McConathy

Call to Order

Introduction

The members of the Clark County Clean Water Commission, the public, and Clark County staff introduced themselves. The meeting was then called to order.

A quorum was achieved.

Agenda and material review

The packet includes:

- 1) 3/1/06 Clean Water Commission Meeting Agenda
- 2) 2/1/06 Clean Water Commission Meeting Notes
- 3) Hearing Notice of Municipal Stormwater Draft Permits
- 4) Updated Project Activity Reports
- 5) 2005 Annual Reports
 - a) Watershed Stewards
 - b) Small Acreage Landholder Outreach Program
- 6) News article from *The Columbian*

Approval

The 2/1/06 meeting notes were approved as written.

Communications with the Public

Mr. Rowell stated that research into the impact of different annexations by Vancouver on the program budget and service levels continues. Revenue will be reduced by \$50,000 – to \$1.5 million. The larger figure is 30% of the Clean Water Program budget.



Mr. Rowell: the Commissioners may wish to comment on the draft NPDES permit from the Washington State Department of Ecology. Please see packet item #3. The following is a summary of the changes in the new Phase I NPDES permit:

- Move to the 2005 stormwater management standards for size of detention ponds, which will frequently increase their required size. Mr. Even: Ecology has a new formula for determining detention pond size that may sometimes cause a doubling or tripling
- More reporting by the jurisdiction to Ecology
- More formalization of stormwater capital improvement plans
- Sub-districts of the County (schools, parks, ports, drainage districts, etc.) that discharge to the county's storm sewer system will need to obtain their own NPDES permits from Ecology

Mr. Owen: what is the Commission's role? Mr. Rowell: become very familiar with the proposed permit, form an opinion, submit your Commission's opinion to the BOCC so that they may comment. Comments are due by mid-May 2006. Mr. Rowell recommended that each Commissioner attend the Ecology presentation at the Water Resources Education Center on April 11, 2006 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to learn more about the proposed permit.

Commissioner Stuart stated that the BOCC will fill the opening on the Clean Water Commission within the next month or so and will work on reappointing Mr. Owen and Mr. Even. The appointment process has become more open and public, so even reappointments will require an interview in a public meeting. He asked what viewpoint or expertise could better be represented on the Commission? Mr. Owen: an environmental activist who can work productively with others. Mr. Owen acknowledged that each Clean Water Commissioner has an environmental ethic but did not fall under the category of an "activist". Mr. Stubbs: what is the best way for the Commission to communicate with the BOCC? Commissioner Stuart: an annual work session, in addition to the annual luncheon, is a good way to communicate the relevant issues. Work sessions help communicate issues to the public.

Commissioner Stuart: the Board will start working on a regional conservation initiative this year – a follow up on Bill Dygert's work – to identify key watersheds, corridors, critical areas, open spaces, and farmland that needs to be preserved in the County. [Factual note: Mr. Dygert is a Clark County native, the former Executive Director of Columbia Land Trust, and a former board member of the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board.] The initiative, which is in the idea stage, will integrate several services, including stormwater management, in a regional approach to promoting healthy watersheds. Commissioner Stuart invited the Clean Water Commissioners to a March 22nd work session on the topic. The next step is to create an action plan for the initiative.

Mr. Stubbs: how much revenue will the County lose if the full-scale Vancouver annexation happens? Commissioner Stuart: the overall County budget would be reduced. Because the County provides most of the social services and mental health services for the area, the reduction in revenue will exceed the reduction in services. The large-scale annexation recently proposed by Vancouver will not happen at this time, though it may happen in stages over several years. The Burnt Bridge Creek annexation, which will cost about \$50,000, is likely to occur very soon.

Public Comments

None.

Old Business

Bylaws

Motion 2006-0301-01: Mr. Stubbs moved to accept the proposed changes to the Bylaws, as presented in item #9 of the February 2006 packet. Ms. van Breemen seconded.

Motion passed by all present Clean Water Commissioners.

Sole-Source Aquifer Petition

Mr. Rowell: the Troutdale aquifer underlies approximately 2/3 of Clark County. Mr. Owen asked the Commission for a motion to either accept or deny the request to write letter of support to the EPA for the sole-source aquifer designation for the Troutdale aquifer.

Motion 2006-0301-02: Mr. Crawford moved to accept the request to write a letter of support to the EPA for the petition to designate the Troutdale aquifer as a sole-source aquifer.

Mr. Owen: it is not our place as an advisory board to the BOCC to write a letter to the EPA; it is more appropriate to ask the County Commissioners to write a letter of support to the EPA. Mr. Owen relayed information from Martha Lentz, the EPA hydrogeologist who oversees the sole-source aquifer program for EPA Region 10: only projects that receive federal funding would require the additional EPA review.

Mr. Stubbs: it is not our role to directly support the petition. Projects that receive federal funding might be schools, bridges, county roads. Projects that might damage the aquifer seem unlikely to pass existing reviews by other agencies.

Mr. Even: how will this affect the Gee Creek project? What is the Gee Creek project? I think this needs to be cleared up; Mr. Even may have meant Curtin Cr? Mr. Rowell: it will increase the number of reviews needed for some projects. Ms Page: what reviews already occur and what level of stringency will the EPA review require? Mr. Rowell: county, state and federal reviews already occur; I do not know the level of stringency the EPA review would require.

Mr. Owen: do current permitting processes evaluate impacts to groundwater? Mr. Rowell: if a project is near a wellhead, the Clark County Departments of Community & Health review it. Mr. Owen: Ms. Lentz informed me that existing laws focus on point source pollution, so reviews of groundwater impacts are triggered *only* if the project is near a wellhead or another groundwater entry point.

Mr. Stubbs: many regulations come from the East Coast; projects that take place in the Northwest rarely succeed without extensive public review that addresses all concerns. I don't see the danger in not having this designation, this extra review. I have faith in our county staff.

Mr. Wilson: why is this designation needed?

Mr. Rowell: In the late 1980s, the state of Washington Groundwater Management Act required local jurisdictions to implement strategies to protect groundwater. Several Puget Sound jurisdictions and Clark County, under the guidance of Washington Department of Ecology, formed Groundwater Management Areas and drafted groundwater management plans. The two-volume Clark County Ground Water Management Plan was completed in 1992. Volume I provides strategies to minimize human impact to groundwater while Volume II consists of several U.S. Geological Service reports as scientific and technical backup. They describe several geological units, including the Troutdale Aquifer.

Since the Act refers to the plan as a “guide,” local jurisdictions implemented as much as they could with available funds. The county, Vancouver, and Clark Public Utilities developed wellhead protection areas in the 1 to 15-year time of travel zones [the distance (or time) it takes for surface pollutants to reach a wellhead or well field] for each larger scale municipal wellhead or well field in the county. The county and Vancouver identified the types of land uses allowable in the areas. Today these area called critical areas and are part of the Critical Areas Ordinance.

Ms. Page: if the designation were approved, properly designed projects with adequate environmental impact planning should easily pass the additional EPA review. Mr. Rowell: sometimes an agency seeks an outcome that results in requirements that conflict with requirements of other agencies.

Mr. Rowell: Please become more informed about this topic by reviewing the EPA website. Mr. Owen noted that information was provided to Clean Water Commissioners via e-mail in late January and as hard-copies at the February meeting. He also gave some examples of occasions when the EPA sole-source aquifer review was triggered and affected projects. Ms. Page: we should do the right thing, whatever that is, and deal with any administrative inefficiencies separately. Mr. Owen: I have worked on projects where approval was granted from a federal agency very easily, with little paperwork, so administrative inefficiency is not a guaranteed outcome of the designation.

The motion passed (4-3 in favor). Mr. Even, Mr. Stubbs, and Mr. Wilson opposed the motion.

Mr. Owen will write a letter to the Board of County Commissioners asking it to support the sole-source aquifer designation for the Troutdale aquifer.

Clean Water Program Budget and Project Activity Reports

Mr. Rowell: the program is essentially on budget for the cycle. The Curtin Creek project is currently held up in litigation.

Packet item #4 is an overview of the program. Mr. Rowell: we are striving to more accurately track each task or project in the Clean Water Program. Please email Mr. Rowell with questions.

2006 Discussion Topics

Mr. Owen: in January the Commission created a list of possible discussion topics for 2006. Now we will vote and then propose a tangible deliverable for each winning topic.

The list of topics is:

- Interlocal agreements (cities, DID, etc.)
- Schedule meetings with BOCC
- Code Enforcement fines
- Monitoring effectiveness (types)
 - Water Quality projects
- Auditor’s performance measures
- Promoting LIDs
- Long range planning
- Annual Report
- Capital Project selection criteria, ranking, weights
- Education program oversight subcommittee
- Establish standards for water quality
- StormFilters

- Incentives
- Review of *Stormwater Management Manual*
- Maintenance of private stormwater facilities

Mr. McConathy requested the addition of the following topics:

- Aging and malfunctioning septic tanks that constitute illegal connections to storm sewer
- ID ditches/swales that feed streams or wetlands
- Review and recommend changes to the Operations & Maintenance manual

The following topics received votes:

Topic	Votes	Proposed Deliverable
Septic Tanks	3	Presentation by Hazel Dell Sewer District and/or Health Dept.
Code Enforcement Fines	3	
Promote LIDs	6	Find a partner
StormFilters	4	Continue learning, educate stakeholders
Review Stormwater Manual	2	
Maintenance of Private Facilities	3	*
Annual Report	**	2005 Annual Report by June 2006
Capital Project selection criteria	**	SCIPIT process (Stormwater Capital Improvement Project Involvement Team)
Education Program Oversight Subcommittee	**	Oversight of Education and Outreach component of the Clean Water Program; education of the Commission on the component

* Ms. Page suggested folding in the Maintenance of Private Facilities topic into the StormFilters topic

** topics were not voted upon because they either must be addressed or are already in process in 2006

The Commission chose to address only those topics with a proposed deliverable above.

Mr. Wilson requested that any review of StormFilters consider the differences between residential and commercial applications of the technology. Mr. Wierenga noted that program staff has begun studying StormFilters but does not have enough data to have reached a conclusion and will keep the Commission updated.

2005 Annual Report

Mr. Owen asked Ms. van Breemen to write section IX, 2006 Action Plan.

Ms. Page has drafted section III, Role of Clark County Clean Water Commission, and will email it to Mr. Owen.

Mr. Owen requested that each Commissioner email him the draft of his or her section prior to the April 5th meeting. [Factual note: section assignments can be found on page 5 of packet item #2, the meeting notes from the February 1st meeting.]

New Business

Stormwater Engineer III Update

Mr. Rowell: The Clean Water Program has hired Mr. Fereidoon Safdari, formerly of the Department of Community Development, and his first day will be March 13, 2006.

Education Subcommittee Update

Mr. Rowell: please review packet items 5a and 5b, the Watershed Stewards 2005 Annual Report and the Small Acreage Landholder Outreach Program 2005 Annual Report, prior to the April meeting.

LID Update

Mr. Owen: Community Development suggested that David Roewe of the Building Industry Association should be involved.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Clean Water Commission will be held on Wednesday, April 5, 2006 from 6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M. The location is the Clark County Public Works Operations Conference Room B-1, 4700 NE 78th Street, Vancouver.

Respectfully Submitted,
Trista Kobluskie

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